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Bethlehem.

The place where the lowly shepherds were told of the good news of great joy – the Good Shepherd, Jesus was born! But long before that, it’s the same place where a young shepherd boy named David was left out, overlooked, and not good enough to be presented to the prophet Samuel. But God had a plan.

The young shepherd, David, became King. In Psalm 23 he writes about how the Lord became HIS great Shepard. And ours too, if we let him.

But sometimes we write our own version of this psalm. It reads something like this…

I am my shepherd. There is never enough.

I lie down in worried places. I hear the roar of noisy waters. It depletes my soul.

I wander, confused on my path, trying to achieve something to be known by.

When I walk through the darkest valley, I fear every evil. Alone and scared, I wonder if God even cares.

My possessions and my popularity try to comfort me.

I have prepared a table but can’t even enjoy it because of the enemies and shame all around me.   
My mind is drowning in worries, my cup is empty.

Surely busyness and worry will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of anxiety forever.

The Good News of Great Joy this Christmas is that the Lord has come into your Bethlehem place. The place of shame, isolation, worry, and fear. He has come to call you out of hiding. He has come to bring you peace, purpose, and great joy!

”The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.”

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